



**CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY CENTER**  
**670 Lee Blvd**  
**Fort Eustis, Virginia 23604-5096**



**EMPLOYEE/SUPERVISOR INFORMATION BULLETIN**

**#08-05 SEPTEMBER 2005**

*This bulletin is designed to inform employees and supervisors of new civilian Human Resource issues and refresh their knowledge of existing policies and procedures. If you have topics you would like us to address, please contact your Human Resource Specialist.*

**TOPICS:**

**FEHB Open Season**

**Flexible Spending Account Federal (FSAFED) Program Update  
for Blue Cross Blue Shield**

**Annual Leave – Use It – Don’t Lose It**

**Army National Security Personnel System (NSPS)  
Implementation**

**Mission Essential vs. Emergency Essential**

**Review of Leave and Earnings Statement**

**New From AMSC...SBLM Tidewater Metro**

**Retirement Ceremonies**

**Elimination of Percentage Restrictions on Employee  
Contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan**

**FEHB OPEN SEASON**

The next Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) and Flexible Spending Account Federal (FSAFEDS) Open Seasons will be 11/14/05 through 12/12/05. Now is a good time to review your personal and family needs for health plans in order to be ready to make any change(s) necessary. More specific information regarding changes in benefit plans, etc. will be provided when available. Employees are reminded that changes to benefits are made

through the Army Benefits Center-Civilian system. Visit <https://www.abc.army.mil/> for additional information.

### **FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT FEDERAL (FSAFED) PROGRAM UPDATE FOR BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD**

The FSAFEDS program allows employees to set money aside, before taxes, to pay for a wide range of health care expenses not covered by their Federal Employees' Health Benefits Plans. Employees covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BC/BS) who are participating in FSAFEDS should note that an error in the FSAFEDS Paperless Reimbursement Quick Reference Guide resulted in an improvement for filing paperless reimbursements claims. As published the guide incorrectly stated FSAFEDS received both fully and partially denied claims from Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BC/BS) for reprocessing. In fact, FSAFED was only receiving partially denied claims from BC/BS. FSAFEDS has announced they are now receiving fully denied claims from BC/BS, in addition to partially denied claims. This means that FSAFEDS will now be able to process fully denied claims via the Paperless Reimbursement program. Employees covered by BC/BS who elected to participate in FSAFEDS no longer need to forward paper claims to FSAFEDS for fully denied claims. However, this improvement is not retroactive. Claims fully denied before August 9, 2005, still require a paper claim be submitted to FSAFEDS.

If you have questions, please contact a FSAFEDS Benefits Counselor at 1-877-FSAFEDS (372-3337), TTY: 1-800-952-0450, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM until 9:00 PM, Eastern Time. You may also visit the FSAFED website at [www.fsafeds.com](http://www.fsafeds.com) <http://www.fsafeds.com> for answers to frequently asked questions.

### **ANNUAL LEAVE - USE IT – DON'T LOSE IT**

Civilian employees normally forfeit unused annual leave in excess of 240 hours at the end of the leave year.

#### **Leave Year Beginning and Ending Dates**

A leave year begins on the first day of the first full biweekly pay period in a calendar year. A leave year ends on the day immediately before the first day of the first full biweekly pay period in the following calendar year.

The beginning and ending dates of leave year 2005 shown below apply to **most employees**.

Leave Year	Leave Year Beginning Date	Leave Year Ending Date	Date for Scheduling "Use or Lose" Annual Leave
2005	January 09, 2005	January 07, 2006	November 26, 2005

Employees may have forfeited leave restored to them if the leave was scheduled in advance with the employee subsequently being denied the opportunity to take that scheduled leave due to the exigencies of public business, a lengthy period of illness, or an administrative error. In cases of the leave being denied due to an exigency of public business, the leave must have been **scheduled/rescheduled in writing, prior to the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> bi-weekly pay period before the end of the leave year. i.e., 26 November 2005.** A Standard Form 71, Application for Leave, may be used for this purpose.

As an alternative to having your "use or lose" annual leave restored, please consider donating the excess to the employees enrolled in the Voluntary Transfer of Annual Leave Program. The Administrative Point of Contact for your organization should have a list of all employees enrolled in the program. Someone will appreciate the gesture and the leave will not be wasted. Donation of use or lose leave is limited to the lesser of the following:

- One-half of the annual leave to be accrued during the leave year in which it is donated OR,
- Hours donating employee is scheduled to **work and receive pay** (not on leave) in the remainder of the leave year.

Questions concerning the restoration of forfeited leave should be addressed to the CPAC Human Resources Specialist assigned to your organization.

### ARMY NATIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL SYSTEM (NSPS) IMPLEMENTATION

The Army is making steady progress in NSPS planning and implementation as part of the overall Department of Defense (DOD) transition effort projected to begin this fall. The Army NSPS Campaign Plan was approved by the G-1 and Manpower & Reserve Affairs. Details on the plan can be found at the Army NSPS website, <http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps/>. The Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff were briefed on NSPS and the content of the NSPS Campaign Plan. The Secretary endorsed the Plan and it has been distributed Army-wide. The first meeting of the NSPS General Officer

Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel and the G-8, was held in July 2005.

The NSPS Training Workshop held August 9-12, 2005, was well received. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Office of the Secretary of Defense, Army leadership, and other DOD Component officials involvement helped to make the Workshop a success. Proposed program changes and detailed implementation and training plans were shared during the workshops that were also designed to garner support and consider input from participants. Further information regarding NSPS can be found online at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/index.html>.

### MISSION ESSENTIAL vs. EMERGENCY ESSENTIAL

Supervisors are responsible for designating both Mission Essential and Emergency/Key Essential personnel/positions. Supervisors must inform the employee occupying an identified position of the requirements of that designation. While very similar, the two have different meanings and conditions.

Mission Essential personnel are identified IAW TCFE Plan 600-2, Severe Weather and Hurricane Preparedness Plan, dated 13 May 2005. Appendix 3 to Annex I (Service Support) of the plan requires Activity heads to designate mission essential personnel, in writing, and ensure employees so designated understand their positions are considered critical to operations that cannot be suspended or interrupted, regardless of the emergency weather situation. The plan **also** allows for identification of "**on the spot**" mission essential personnel where warranted. Situations other than severe weather have resulted in a requirement to identify more specific designations. In addition to severe weather, supervisors should designate positions/personnel required during Force Protection and Information Management Systems emergencies. In many instances the same positions/personnel would be identified for all three. After designating employees as mission essential, supervisors must ensure their activity furnish a list to the CPAC of personnel identified for each category.

Emergency/Key Essential personnel/positions are identified as those performing critical duties during national emergencies and mobilization exercises.

Emergency Essential (E-E) personnel/positions are governed by DOD Directive 1404.10 and AR 690-11. They are defined as positions located overseas or transferred overseas during a crisis situation or personnel

required to provide direct support to combat operations, or to combat systems support functions that must be continued subsequent to mobilization or an evacuation order are identified as E-E. The position is one that cannot be converted to a military position because uninterrupted performance is required to provide immediate and continuing support. Employees occupying designated E-E positions must sign an agreement, as a condition of employment and understand that they may be required to deploy to overseas areas during a crisis situation. Individuals occupying E-E positions must be exempted from recall status (Ready Reserves, Standby Reserves or military retirees).

Key Essential (Key) personnel/positions are governed by DOD Instruction 12000.7 and AR 690-11. Key positions are positions that cannot be vacated during a national emergency or mobilization without seriously impairing the capability to function effectively, because of the essential nature of these positions. Because of essential nature of these positions they cannot be filled by Ready Reservist, Standby Reserves and military retirees with recall obligations.

## REVIEW OF LEAVE AND EARNINGS STATEMENTS

Employees are responsible for reviewing their Leave and Earnings Statements (LES). Any errors should be reported immediately to the Customer Service Representative at 878-4484 or email [woodardv@eustis.army.mil](mailto:woodardv@eustis.army.mil). Upon receipt of the LES each employee should review it to ensure the pay is correct, leave accrual and usage are correct and deductions are correct. Remember that changes made through MyPay should be checked against the LES covering the pay period of the confirmed effective date. Remember that the statement you are reviewing is for the previous pay period. The pay period ending date of the LES you are reviewing is shown in Block 1, upper right hand corner of the LES. A pay period/pay day chart is attached to assist you in determining when changes should be reflected on your LES.

## NEW FROM AMSC...SBLM TIDEWATER METRO

FORT BELVOIR, VA. (ARMY MANAGEMENT STAFF COLLEGE, July 14, 2005) - Do you work in the Virginia Tidewater area? Have you wanted to attend the Sustaining Base Leadership and Management program at the Army Management Staff College, but the existing program options just don't work in your schedule/lifestyle? Well, here's something tailored just for you!

AMSC is offering a new way to deliver the education you need—it's the SBLM Tidewater Metro program. The official designation for this class will be

**SBLM06-T1.** It begins January 2006 but you have to act fast to apply — **applications are due to HQDA by September 2, 2005.**

What is SBLM Tidewater Metro? This program allows students to complete the SBLM curriculum primarily by commuting to classes in the Tidewater area. It allows flexibility and extended time to complete the course. It requires only short residence periods, and it takes advantage of the fact that there are enough potential students in the Tidewater area to form seminar groups.

#### Who Can Apply?

- \* GS-12 through GS-14 (or equivalent). GS-11 and GS-15 by exception.
- \* Military in ranks of major or lieutenant colonel, chief warrant officers, sergeants major or command sergeants major.

#### What are the Key Features of SBLM Tidewater Metro?

- \* It runs from January 2 to December 15, 2006
- \* Resident sessions will be two weeks, January 23 - February 3 and then one week every other month (April, June, August and October). The final week, December 11 - 15, will be in residence at the AMSC campus in lodging on Fort Belvoir, VA. All resident sessions will be conducted during the week on duty time.
- \* Distance education will take place during the remainder of the year.
- \* It has the same SBLM standards and faculty roles.
- \* It provides more time and flexibility to meet requirements.

For additional information visit:

[http://amscportal.belvoir.army.mil/archives/2005/07/new\\_from\\_amscsb.html](http://amscportal.belvoir.army.mil/archives/2005/07/new_from_amscsb.html)

### RETIREMENT CEREMONIES

Did you know that retiring civilian employees are eligible to participate in the Installation Retirement Ceremony? This ceremony is held bimonthly at either Murphy Field or Anderson Field House depending upon the season/weather to honor retiring employees. The next ceremony is scheduled to be held on **September 28, 2005**. Future ceremony dates can be found on the Post Deconflictor Calendar located on the Fort Eustis Homepage. If you would like to participate in a retirement ceremony, you must also participate in the rehearsal which is usually held the day before the actual ceremony. Spouses and escorts are also encouraged to attend the rehearsal. Retirees and escorts are expected to wear appropriate civilian attire (sports coat or suit for males; dress or pants suit for females). If you are retiring and interested in participating in a retirement ceremony, please contact Karri Dobson at 878-1368. Karri must be notified at least 4 weeks in advance of your desire to participate in the ceremony.

## **ELIMINATION OF PERCENTAGE RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN**

The percentage limitations on Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) employee contributions will be lifted in 2006. Effective the first full pay period in January 2006, employee contributions to the TSP will be limited only by the restrictions imposed by the Internal Revenue Code.

The percentage limitations on agency contributions to the TSP accounts of FERS<sup>1</sup> participants are not affected by this change and remain the same. That is, agency automatic (1%) contributions are equal to one percent of the participant's basic pay for the pay period, and agency matching contributions may be up to four percent of the participant's basic pay for the pay period. More information can be found in TSP Bulletin 05-10 <http://www.tsp.gov/cgi-bin/byteserver.cgi/bulletins/05-10.pdf>.